



# Assessing Agricultural Workplace Inequalities for Women: A Case Study of Dataur Village of Rohtak District

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**Abstract**— *This study investigates the workplace challenges faced by women agricultural labourers in Dataur village of Rohtak district, Haryana. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the research highlights the harsh realities of women working in agriculture, including frequent injuries (34.5%), lack of drinking water (17.5%), exposure to insect bites (15.5%) and pesticides (14%), and equipment issues (13%). Nearly 19.5% reported facing harassment at work, indicating unsafe and insecure environments. Furthermore, 75% of respondents stated that basic workplace facilities were unavailable, while only 18% were aware of government welfare schemes aimed at labour welfare and empowerment. These findings reveal a significant gap in infrastructure, awareness, and policy implementation. The study concludes that women agricultural workers in Dataur remain vulnerable due to poor workplace conditions and limited access to support systems. It recommends targeted policy measures, improved awareness, and infrastructure development to ensure dignity, safety, and equality for women in agriculture.*



**Keywords**— *Agricultural Labour, Drinking Water, First Aid, Socio-Economic.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for a significant proportion of India's rural population, with women constituting a vital yet often unrecognised segment of the agricultural workforce. Despite their indispensable role, women agricultural labourers are subjected to multiple layers of inequality, particularly in states like Haryana, where patriarchal structures and socio-economic hierarchies are deeply entrenched. This research paper examines the agricultural workplace inequalities faced by women through a detailed geographical case study of Dataur village in Rohtak district. It seeks to uncover the gender-based disparities in wages, working conditions, resource access, and social recognition that rural women encounter daily in the agricultural sector.

India's 2011 Census and subsequent National Sample Survey data reflect that women account for approximately 33% of cultivators and 47% of agricultural labourers (Census of India, 2011). However, their work is largely

unrecognised in formal economic statistics. As Bina Agarwal (1994) famously argued, "Women are invisible workers in agriculture — they are either not counted or discounted." In Haryana, the scenario is especially stark. Although women are actively involved in transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and livestock care, their work is often seen as an extension of domestic duty rather than productive labour. This social undervaluation results in systemic inequalities in wages, ownership, rights, and decision-making power.

Dataur, a mid-sized village in Rohtak, offers a representative microcosm of these gendered dynamics. Field observations and interviews conducted in the village reveal that most women labourers belong to landless or marginal farmer households. They are employed seasonally, often on a daily-wage basis, and are paid less than their male counterparts despite performing similar or more laborious tasks. According to one respondent, "We start working before sunrise and go home after sunset, but

still earn less than the men who work fewer hours.” Such testimonies underscore the persistence of gender wage gaps, which national-level data confirm. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS 2022-23) indicates that female agricultural workers earn on average 30–40% less than males for similar work.

The root causes of workplace inequality are multifaceted. First is the unequal wage structure. Female agricultural labourers in Dataur reported earning very less for females in comparison to males. This gap is not merely an economic disparity but reflects the entrenched belief that women’s labour is secondary or supplementary. Second, access to resources and agricultural inputs is severely limited for women. Land ownership, which provides security and autonomy in farming, is rare among women in the village. Most land titles are in the names of male family members. As per the Agriculture Census 2015–16, only 13.9% of operational land holdings in India are owned by women, with Haryana reporting even lower figures. This deprives women not only of independent livelihood but also of access to credit, subsidies, and government schemes.

Another significant issue is a lack of recognition in decision-making and governance. Women in Dataur are rarely consulted in matters related to crop planning, marketing, or financial investment, even though they actively participate in farming operations. Their exclusion from agricultural cooperatives and local governance structures reinforces their marginal position. Scholars like Shiva (1988) have emphasised that “Women’s knowledge and participation in agriculture are both vast and vital, yet systematically ignored” (Shiva, 1988). This invisibility in institutional frameworks prevents them from voicing their needs or claiming rights.

The dual burden of productive and reproductive labour further exacerbates workplace inequalities. Women labourers in Dataur, like in most rural settings, are expected to manage household chores, child care, water collection, and food preparation in addition to working in the fields. This double workload results in physical exhaustion and chronic health issues. A study by the National Commission for Women (NCW, 2020) notes that over 70% of female farm labourers suffer from anaemia, musculoskeletal disorders, or reproductive health complications due to long working hours, inadequate nutrition, and lack of healthcare access.

Occupational health and safety is another area where women face systemic neglect. In Dataur, women often work barefoot in fields treated with chemical pesticides and fertilisers without any protective gear. The risks of heat stress, chemical exposure, and injuries go unreported

and untreated. According to a study published in the Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (2019), female agricultural workers in India are “disproportionately exposed to workplace hazards and are underserved by rural healthcare systems.” In this context, health becomes both a gender and spatial justice issue, where rural women are systematically denied their right to safe working environments.

Cultural and societal norms act as both cause and effect of these inequalities. Haryana’s patriarchal social order, reinforced by khap panchayats and local customs, restricts women’s mobility, autonomy, and participation in public life. Practices such as purdah, limited educational attainment, and early marriage contribute to the exclusion of women from skill development programs, technology use, and leadership roles in agriculture. As noted by Rao (2008), “The gendered division of labour in Indian agriculture is not just functional, it is ideological and hierarchical.” In Dataur, this ideology manifests in how women’s contributions are framed as help rather than work deserving of compensation or recognition.

Despite the constraints, women in Dataur have shown resilience and adaptive strategies. Many have formed informal labour groups to negotiate wages collectively or have joined local self-help groups (SHGs) for savings and credit access. However, these grassroots efforts require institutional support to scale up. Policy initiatives must focus on ensuring equal pay for equal work, gender-sensitive training and extension services, legal rights to land and credit, health insurance for female workers, and greater inclusion in agricultural governance. The Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is a promising step, but needs stronger implementation at the village level.

This study, through the lens of Dataur, aims to contribute to the broader discourse on gender and rural labour by providing grounded, place-based insights into how inequalities are structured and sustained. A geographical perspective is essential to understanding these issues, not just as abstract socio-economic challenges but as spatially embedded realities shaped by local power relations, land tenure systems, and rural infrastructures. As Massey (1994) argued, “Space is not a static backdrop but a product of interrelations” (Massey, 1994). Hence, this research emphasises that addressing inequalities in rural women’s agricultural labour requires not only economic interventions but spatial justice rooted in everyday lived geographies.

### **Definition of Agricultural Labourers according to the Census of India: -**

As per the 2001 census, "A person who works on another person's land for wages in cash or kind or share will be regarded as agricultural labour." However, the definition of "all those workers who worked on the farms of others and received payment either in cash or kind (or both)" excludes those farm workers who work on other farms as a secondary occupation (Census of India, 2001).

### **Women's Activity in the Agricultural Sector: -**

In Haryana, women play a crucial but often underrecognized role in agriculture, contributing significantly across various stages of farming. Their involvement spans both crop production and allied agricultural activities. In the field, women engage in sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and post-harvest processing. Tasks such as manual weeding and transplanting rice are labour-intensive and primarily carried out by women, often in harsh conditions without mechanised tools or proper protective gear.

Beyond crop cultivation, women are actively involved in livestock rearing—milking animals, cleaning sheds, feeding cattle, and processing dairy products. They also participate in collecting fodder, preparing compost, and managing small-scale kitchen gardens. However, despite their contribution, women seldom hold land titles or participate in decision-making regarding crop selection or market sales.

A large number of women also contribute through unpaid family labour, especially in small and marginal farming households. Their work remains undervalued and invisible in official statistics and policy discourse. Limited access to agricultural training, credit, and technology further deepens gender disparities. Nonetheless, women's roles are indispensable to Haryana's agrarian economy, making their empowerment vital for the state's rural development and agricultural sustainability. Recognition and support of their work are necessary steps toward inclusive and equitable agricultural growth.

### **Study Area: -**

Dataur is a prominent village located in the Rohtak district of Haryana, situated approximately 20 kilometres south of Rohtak city and around 65 kilometres northwest of Delhi. Geographically, the village lies within the fertile plains of the Indo-Gangetic basin, characterised by alluvial soil, which is highly suitable for agriculture. It falls under the administrative jurisdiction of Sampla tehsil and is well-connected by road and rail networks, with Sampla Railway Station nearby, offering accessibility to major urban centres.

According to the Census of India, 2011, the village has a population of 3607 people, with agriculture as the primary occupation. The majority of the population belongs to farming communities, including both landowning households and landless agricultural labourers. Caste dynamics play a significant role in the village's social structure, with dominant castes owning most of the land and marginalised groups often working as wage labourers in the fields. Women, especially from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are heavily involved in agricultural activities such as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, and livestock care (Census of India, 2011).

Dataur experiences a semi-arid climate with extreme temperatures, which directly impacts the agricultural cycles. Major crops cultivated in the region include wheat, mustard, sugarcane, bajra (pearl millet), and paddy. Irrigation largely depends on tube wells and canal systems, with fluctuating access to water resources affecting productivity.

The village presents a relevant case for studying gender-based agricultural inequalities due to its typical agrarian setup, gender division of labour, and social norms. While technological advances have reached some parts of the village, women's access to these innovations remains limited. The spatial and socio-economic characteristics of Dataur make it an ideal micro-level unit for assessing the roles, contributions, and challenges faced by women agricultural labourers in Haryana, reflecting broader patterns found across rural north India.

### **Objectives: -**

- i. To examine the participation of women in various agricultural activities in the Study Area.
- ii. To study the obstacles faced by women in the agricultural sector in the study area.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology adopted for analysing the problems faced by women labourers in the agricultural sector at their workplaces will follow a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach. This research includes both primary and secondary sources. A qualitative research design will be primarily used to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and specific challenges encountered by women involved in agricultural labour. This will include conducting semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observations, enabling the researcher to capture diverse perspectives and personal narratives. The qualitative approach is intended to provide depth and context to the realities faced by these

women in their daily work environments. In addition to qualitative methods, a quantitative component will also be integrated into the study to support the analysis with measurable data. A structured questionnaire will be administered to 200 respondents, ensuring a diverse and representative sample across different socio-economic and caste groups. This tool will help gather detailed information on the demographic profile of participants, along with key issues such as wage inequality, work conditions, health concerns, and access to resources. Secondary data will be collected from the census of India, 2011, published and unpublished reports, etc. The data collected will be analysed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify patterns and trends at the village level.

Microsoft Excel will be employed for organising and interpreting the quantitative data, as well as for the creation of visual aids like bar charts and pie graphs. These graphical representations will help in illustrating the key findings in a more accessible and comparative manner. This mixed-methods approach will ensure a well-rounded and rigorous examination of the workplace inequalities faced by women agricultural labourers in Dataur village, facilitating both depth and breadth in the research outcome.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis and interpretation of data represent the most critical stage of the research process. Analysis refers to the method of deriving significant insights from the collected survey data. However, analysis alone is not complete without interpretation, just as interpretation cannot proceed without proper analysis — the two are interdependent. Interpretation involves assigning meaning to the analysed data and understanding what the findings imply. It requires careful and balanced judgment to ensure the results are understood accurately and meaningfully.

*Table No. 1: Category-wise bifurcation of Respondents*

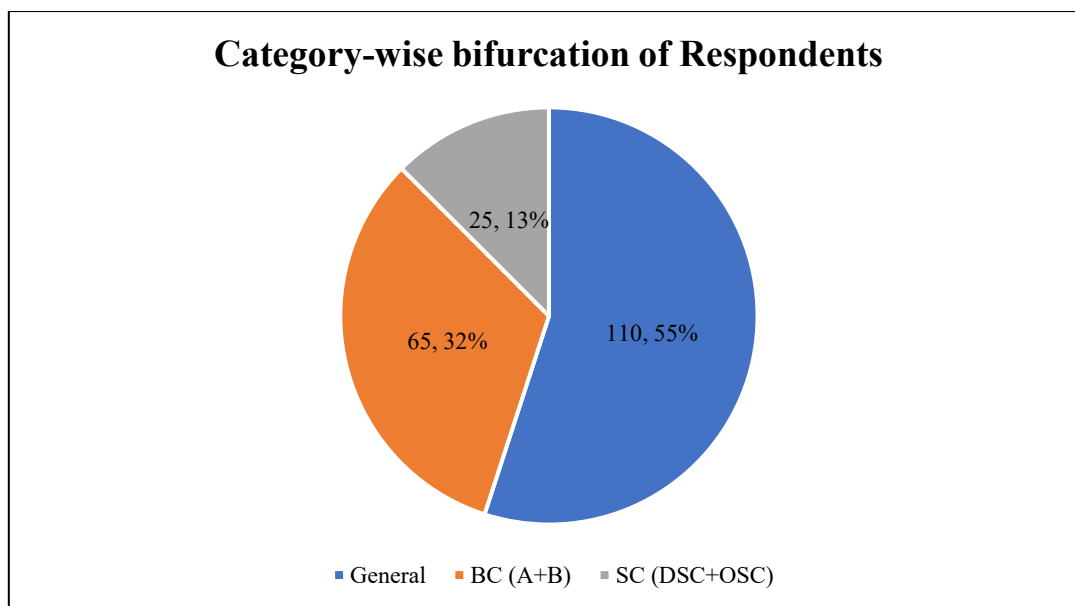
Sr. No.	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	General	110	55
2.	BC (A+B)	65	32.5
3.	SC (DSC+OSC)	25	12.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Survey

The given data reflects the caste-wise distribution of 200 respondents surveyed in a rural agricultural setting, categorised under General, Backwards Classes (BC A+B), and Scheduled Castes (SC – including both Designated Scheduled Castes [DSC] and Other Scheduled Castes [OSC]). Out of the total respondents, 110 belong to the General category, accounting for 55% of the total sample. This suggests that more than half of the surveyed population comes from relatively socially and economically advantaged backgrounds. The higher representation of this group may also reflect the demographic composition of the village, or it may indicate greater access to land, education, or decision-making roles within agricultural work settings.

The Backwards Classes (BC), including both categories A and B, make up 65% of the respondents, which corresponds to 32.5% of the sample. This significant share shows the notable presence of middle-ranking caste groups who, while not as privileged as the General category, still play a substantial role in the local agrarian economy. These groups often possess small to medium landholdings and are involved in both farming and labour. Their position in the rural hierarchy is complex—they may exercise some social and economic power over the SCs but remain disadvantaged in comparison to the General category.

The Scheduled Castes, comprising both DSC and OSC segments, constitute 25 respondents, making up 12.5% of the total.



*Fig 1: Category-wise bifurcation of Respondents*

Source: Table No. 1

This is the smallest group represented in the sample. SC communities are historically marginalised and often engaged in agricultural labour under precarious conditions. They are more likely to be landless or involved in low-paid and physically demanding tasks. Their underrepresentation in the total number of respondents may also point toward social exclusion or a lack of empowerment in public and economic spheres. In many cases, women from SC backgrounds face compounded disadvantages due to both caste and gender-based discrimination.

*Table No. 2: Mental/ Physical Harassment Faced by Women*

Sr. No.	Harassment	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Faced	39	19.5
2.	Not Faced	161	80.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Survey

Table No. 2 reveals significant insights into the challenges they face in their workplace environment. Out of a total of 200 respondents, 39 women, accounting for 19.5%, reported that they have faced harassment while working in agricultural fields. This indicates that nearly one in five women experiences some form of harassment, which may include verbal abuse, inappropriate behaviour,

intimidation, or even physical exploitation. This is a serious concern, as it reflects the vulnerability of women labourers who often lack formal workplace protections and are dependent on daily wages for survival.

In contrast, 161 respondents, or 80.5%, reported not facing harassment in their work environment. While this majority suggests that most women perceive their workplaces to be safe, it is important to consider that underreporting of harassment is common in rural areas like Dataur due to fear of social stigma, loss of employment, and the hierarchical structure of rural society. Many women may be hesitant to speak out due to pressure from family members or fear of retribution from landowners or male co-workers. Therefore, the actual incidence of harassment could be higher than what the data shows.

In the context of Dataur village, where agricultural work is a primary source of income for many rural women, workplace safety and dignity are crucial components of empowerment and equality. The reported cases of harassment point toward a need for greater awareness, stronger support systems, and the implementation of local grievance redressal mechanisms. Gender-sensitive policies, legal literacy, and community-based interventions are essential to ensure that women can work without fear and with dignity in the fields. Addressing harassment is not only a matter of personal safety but also a step toward achieving broader gender justice in the rural agricultural sector.



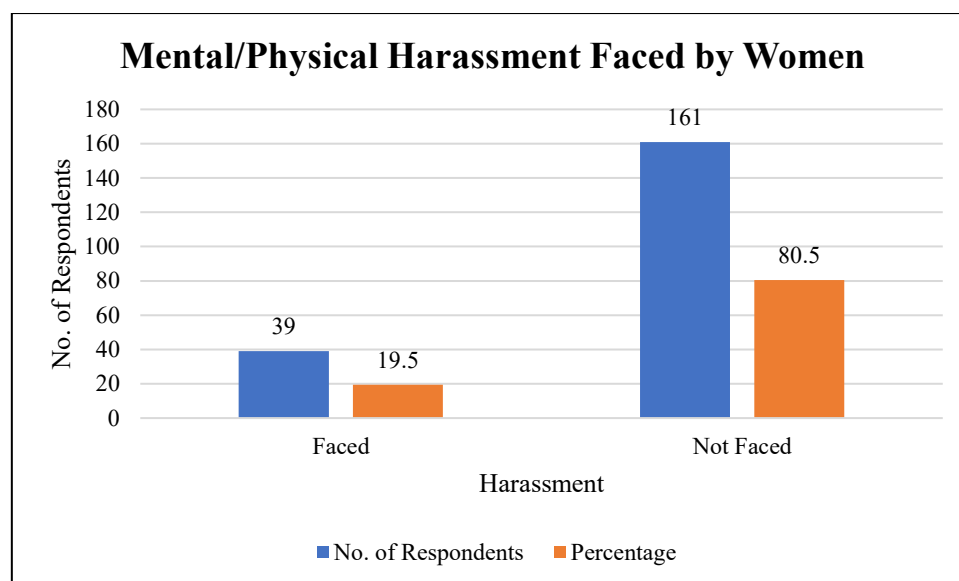


Fig 2: Mental/Physical Harassment Faced by Women

Source: Table No. 2

Table No. 3: Facing Problems in the Field by respondents

Sr. No.	Facing Problems by Women	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Availability of Drinking Water	35	17.5
2.	Injury at the workplace	69	34.5
3.	High or Low Temperature	11	5.5
4.	Bite by Insects	31	15.5
5.	Side Effects of Pesticides	28	14
6.	Problem related to Equipment	26	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

The data presented highlights various workplace-related problems faced by women agricultural labourers in Dataur village of Rohtak district, providing a window into the daily physical and environmental challenges they endure while contributing significantly to the rural economy. These issues, often overlooked in formal labour discussions, have direct implications for the health, safety, and dignity of women workers.

The most commonly reported issue is injury at the workplace, with 69 respondents, or 34.5%, indicating they have suffered physical injuries while engaged in

agricultural tasks. This reflects the hazardous nature of manual farm labour, which often involves strenuous activities like lifting, bending, working with sharp tools, and handling livestock. The lack of protective gear and safety training further exposes women to frequent accidents and bodily harm, many of which go unrecorded and untreated due to limited access to medical facilities or financial constraints.

The availability of drinking water emerged as the second most reported issue, with 35 women (17.5%) stating they do not have access to clean or sufficient drinking water during their work hours. This is especially concerning in the context of Haryana's hot climate, where dehydration and heatstroke are real risks. The unavailability of safe drinking water not only affects women's health and productivity but also reflects deeper infrastructural gaps in rural employment settings that neglect the basic needs of workers, particularly women. Insect bites were reported by 31 respondents (15.5%), indicating the common exposure of women to unhygienic and unsafe conditions in open fields. Many women work without proper clothing or footwear, making them vulnerable to bites from mosquitoes, ants, or other insects, which can sometimes lead to infections or serious allergic reactions. This issue, while often dismissed as minor, can have cumulative effects on workers' health and efficiency.

Closely following is the problem of side effects from pesticides, reported by 28 women (14%). In most cases, women work in fields where pesticides have recently been sprayed or even handle the chemicals directly without protective equipment. Exposure to pesticides can cause

headaches, dizziness, skin irritations, respiratory problems, and long-term health complications such as reproductive issues. Unfortunately, many women are not aware of the dangers or lack the authority to demand safer working conditions. Equipment-related problems were faced by 26 respondents (13%). Many agricultural tools are designed keeping male users in mind, which may not be

ergonomically suitable for women. Moreover, women often use outdated or faulty equipment, increasing the risk of accidents and making the work more physically demanding. The absence of gender-sensitive agricultural tools continues to hinder productivity and comfort for female labourers.

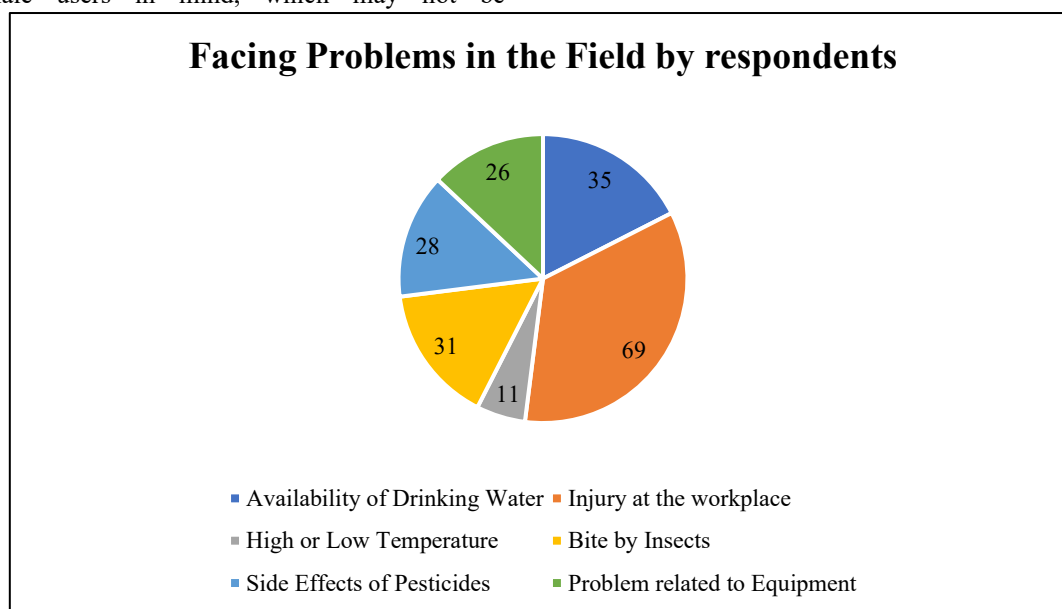


Fig 3: Facing Problems in the Field by respondents

Source: Table No. 3

Lastly, 11 women (5.5%) cited extreme temperatures—either high heat in summers or cold in winters—as a significant issue. Haryana's climate can be quite harsh, and agricultural labourers are required to work for long hours in open fields under direct exposure. This not only leads to physical discomfort but can also contribute to long-term health deterioration, particularly among older women and those with pre-existing conditions.

Table No. 4: Availability of First Aid Kit

Sr. No.	Availability	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	38	19
2.	No	150	75
3.	Don't Know	12	06
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

The above table highlights the awareness and availability of certain facilities or support systems—possibly safety measures, welfare schemes, or workplace rights—among women agricultural labourers in Dataur village of Rohtak district. Out of a total of 200 respondents, only 38 women

(19%) acknowledged the availability of such facilities in their workplace. This relatively low percentage indicates a serious gap in the provision or communication of resources intended for the welfare of women workers. It suggests that a majority of women do not benefit from or are not reached by government schemes, local support networks, or institutional protections that might exist on paper but fail in execution at the grassroots level.

A significant 75% of the respondents (150 women) reported that such provisions were not available to them. This majority reflects the widespread neglect of women's workplace needs in the agricultural sector. Whether it's access to clean drinking water, first aid, shade during extreme weather, or protection from workplace harassment, the absence of these facilities severely affects the dignity, health, and productivity of women labourers. Their lack of formal employment status further isolates them from labour rights and entitlements.

Additionally, 12 respondents (6%) stated that they did not know whether such facilities were available. This highlights a clear lack of awareness and communication, which is often a consequence of limited education, weak

community outreach, and insufficient engagement by government or local bodies with women labourers.

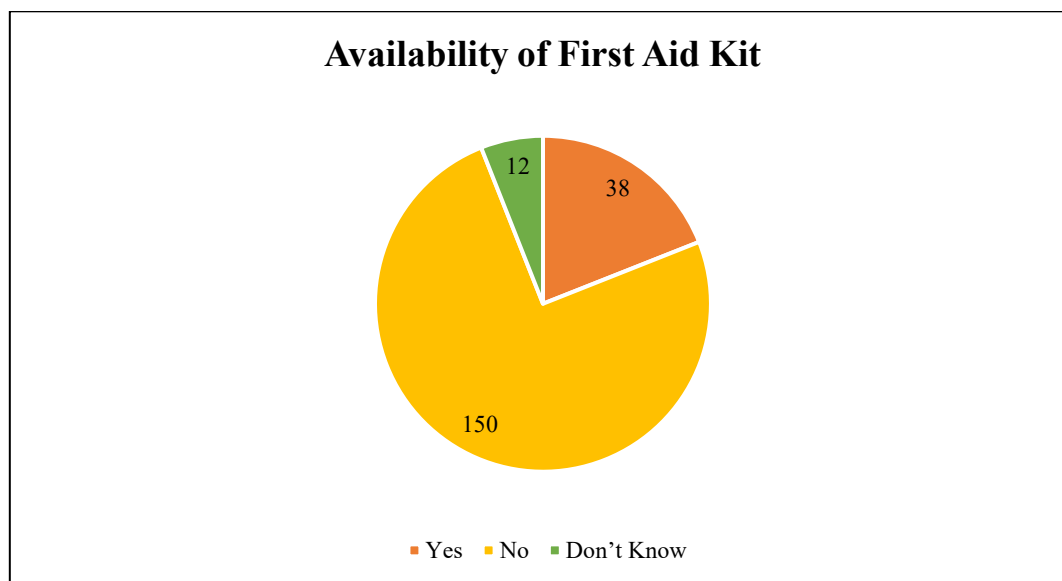


Fig 4: Availability of First Aid Kit

Source: Table No. 4

Together, the data reveal a critical need for better infrastructure, information dissemination, and policy implementation in villages like Dataur. Ensuring that women are both aware of and have access to essential workplace facilities is not only a matter of welfare, but also of justice and equality in the rural workforce.

Table No. 5: Knowledge about Government Schemes

Sr. No.	Knowledge of Govt schemes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	36	18
2.	No	164	82
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

The data regarding the knowledge of government schemes among women agricultural labourers in Dataur village of Rohtak district reveals a concerning lack of awareness and outreach. Out of 200 respondents, only 36 women (18%) reported that they were aware of government schemes related to labour welfare, women's empowerment, agriculture, or social security. This small percentage underscores a significant gap in information dissemination at the grassroots level, especially among rural women who

form the backbone of India's agricultural workforce. These women, despite being active contributors to the rural economy, remain largely disconnected from state-sponsored programs designed to support their livelihood, health, and social security.

On the other hand, a staggering 164 women (82%) responded that they had no knowledge of such schemes. This overwhelming majority highlights the failure of both central and state government machinery to effectively communicate and implement welfare programs in rural areas. Programs such as the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, and MGNREGA offer potential benefits in terms of financial assistance, insurance, pensions, training, and job security. However, without proper awareness and access, these remain underutilized and often inaccessible to the very people they aim to uplift.

Several factors contribute to this lack of awareness, including low literacy rates among rural women, absence of targeted awareness campaigns, limited engagement by local officials, and gender-based exclusion from decision-making spaces. Additionally, many women agricultural workers are informal labourers without any official registration, making it even harder for them to be eligible for or informed about such schemes.



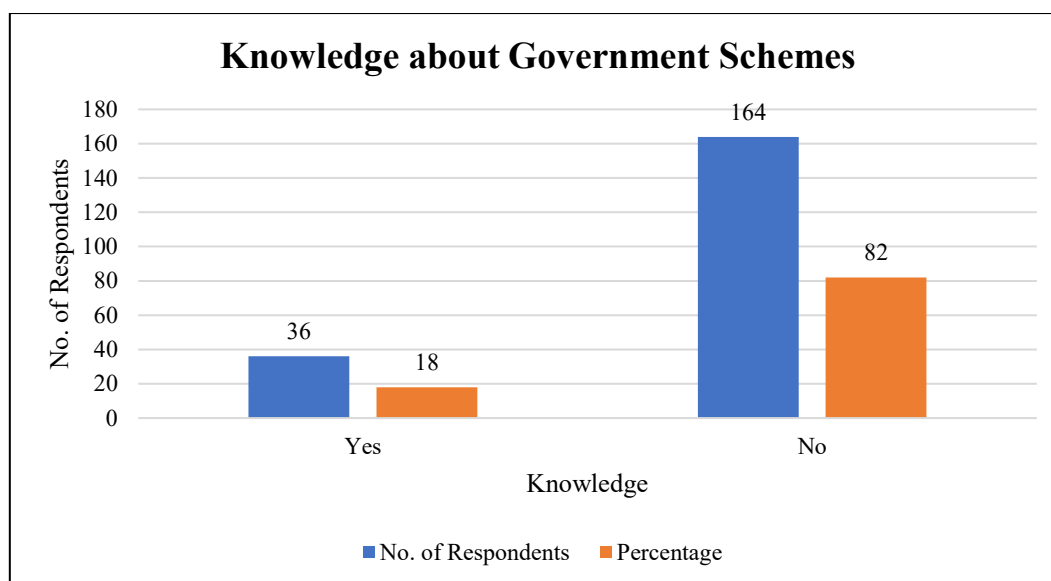


Fig 5: Knowledge about Government Schemes

Source: Table No. 5

In the context of Dataur village, these findings point toward an urgent need for better grassroots mobilisation, community-level sensitisation programs, and active involvement of panchayats and self-help groups to bridge this information gap. Ensuring that women are not only aware of but also able to access and benefit from government schemes is essential for promoting economic security, workplace equity, and overall rural development. Unless rural women are made central to the welfare delivery process, the impact of these schemes will remain limited, and the broader goal of inclusive growth will be difficult to achieve.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study of workplace conditions and challenges faced by women agricultural labourers in Dataur village of Rohtak district presents a compelling picture of persistent gender-based disparities, structural neglect, and lack of institutional support in the rural agrarian economy. Women form an essential yet undervalued part of the agricultural workforce, often engaging in physically demanding tasks under unsafe and poorly regulated conditions. Despite their significant contribution, the findings reveal that a large number of these women continue to work without access to basic facilities, social security, or knowledge of government schemes designed for their welfare. One of the key findings is the prevalence of workplace problems such as injuries, unavailability of drinking water, insect bites, side effects of pesticides, and equipment-related issues. Nearly 34.5% of the women reported workplace injuries, highlighting the lack of safety

measures and proper training. The absence of essential facilities like clean drinking water, reported by 17.5% of respondents, further reflects a neglect of women's health needs in the field. Similarly, exposure to pesticides and insect bites, affecting 14% and 15.5% of respondents, respectively, raises serious concerns about occupational hazards and the need for protective gear and medical awareness. Such conditions not only threaten the physical well-being of women but also undermine their dignity and productivity in the workplace. Harassment remains another critical issue. While 19.5% of respondents reported facing harassment, the actual number may be higher due to underreporting, influenced by fear, social stigma, and lack of redressal mechanisms. These findings emphasise the need for a safer, more gender-sensitive work environment that empowers women to voice their concerns without fear of repercussions. Furthermore, 75% of the women stated that essential facilities were not available at their workplaces, and a further 6% were unaware of whether such provisions existed, indicating a serious communication and infrastructure gap. A particularly alarming insight from the study is the lack of awareness regarding government welfare schemes. A vast majority, 82% of the women, did not know that existing schemes were meant for their benefit. This points to a systemic failure in policy implementation and information dissemination. Schemes such as the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana, MGNREGA, and pension plans for unorganised workers remain underutilised due to a lack of education, outreach, and institutional follow-up at the village level. Without targeted efforts to inform and

include women agricultural labourers in welfare programs, these initiatives cannot achieve their intended goals.

The study clearly shows that women agricultural labourers in Dataur face multiple and interlinked challenges related to safety, health, awareness, and access to rights. These issues are not merely individual hardships but reflect a broader pattern of socio-economic exclusion. Addressing them requires urgent policy intervention, grassroots mobilisation, awareness programs, and gender-sensitive planning. Empowering rural women through access to information, workplace protections, and social welfare schemes is not only essential for their upliftment but also for the sustainable development of the agricultural sector as a whole.

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